

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Claim 1. (Currently amended) A method for reducing acid components of roasted coffee beans, comprising contacting said treatment, wherein a steam treatment is effected on the roasted coffee beans by supplying steam thereto under a flowing steam, for a time sufficient to reduce acid component of said roasted coffee beanscondition thereof.

Claim 2. (Currently amended) The method of claim 1, roasted coffee beans treatment according to claim 1, wherein said the roasted coffee beans are placed in an apparatus which has accommodated in a bean accommodating portion having a steam supply passage and a steam exhaust passage, said method further comprising and the steam treatment is effected by flowing the steam from the steam supply passage to the said steam exhaust passage, under conditions whereby steam exiting said such that the steam is exhausted from the steam exhaust passage at has an outlet pressure higher than the atmospheric pressure.

Claim 3. (Currently amended) The method of roasted coffee beans treatment according to claim 1 or 2, wherein the said roasted coffee beans comprise whole roasted beans and ground roasted beans which can pass a mesh of an aperture of 1.7 mm and the amount of the ground roasted beans is 70 weight % or less.

Claim 4. (Currently amended) The method of roasted coffee beans treatment according to claim 1 or 2, wherein that the said roasted coffee beans comprise whole roasted beans.

Claim 5. (Currently amended) The method of ~~roasted coffee beans treatment according to claim 1 or 2~~, wherein the amount of steam used in the steam treatment is 10 weight % or more of the weight of the said roasted coffee beans comprise ground roasted coffee beans capable of passing through a mesh with an aperture of 1.7 mm, wherein said ground roasted coffee beans are present in an amount of up to 70% of said roasted coffee beans.

Claim 6. (Currently amended) The method of ~~roasted coffee beans treatment according to claim 1 or 2~~, wherein that the steam comprises saturated steam said roasted coffee beans comprise ground roasted coffee beans capable of passing through a mesh with an aperture of 1.7 mm, wherein said ground roasted coffee beans are present in an amount of up to 70% of said roasted coffee beans.

Claim 7. (Currently amended) The method of ~~roasted coffee beans treatment according to claim 1 or 2~~, wherein the using an amount of steam weighing at least 10% of the weight of said roasted coffee beans has a temperature of from 100 to 230°C.

Claim 8. (Currently amended) Steam treated ~~roasted coffee beans which have received a steam treatment by supplying steam to the beans under a flowing condition thereof, the resulting roasted coffee beans having an extraction ratio of 35% or more, a sum of~~ The method of claim 2, comprising using an amount of steam weighing at least 10% of the formic acid and an amount of acetic acid relative to the roasted coffee beans being 0.25 weight of said roasted coffee beans% or less.

Claim 9. (Currently amended) The method of steam treated coffee beans according to claim 18, wherein the roasted coffee beans are accommodated

in a bean accommodating portion having a said steam is water saturated steam supply passage and a steam exhaust passage and the steam treatment is effected by flowing saturated steam of from 100 to 230°C from the steam supply passage to the steam exhaust passage such that the steam is exhausted from the steam exhaust passage at an outlet pressure higher than the atmospheric pressure.

Claim 10. (new) The method of claim 2, wherein said steam is water saturated steam.

Claim 11. (new) The method of claim 1, wherein said steam is at a temperature of from 100 to 230°C.

Claim 12. (new) Steam treated, roasted coffee beans produced by the method of claim 1, having an extraction ratio of at least 35%, and a total amount of formic acid and acetic acid less than 0.25% of the weight of said roasted coffee beans.

Claim 13. (new) Steam treated, roasted coffee beans produced by the method of claim 2, having an extraction ratio of at least 35%, and a total amount of formic acid and acetic acid less than 0.25% of the weight of said roasted coffee beans.